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General and complete disarmament: towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda

Letter dated 13 September 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a communiqué (see annex) issued today, 13 September, by the Foreign Ministers of the New Agenda Coalition Countries (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden) following a meeting in which the Ministers reviewed progress on their joint initiative, entitled "Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: the need for a new agenda".

I would be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 73 (i).

(*Signed*) Pierre **Schori**

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Annex to the letter dated 13 September 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the New Agenda Coalition Countries

(Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden)

New York, 13 September 2000

Meeting to review progress on their joint initiative, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", the Ministers noted that their initiative had advanced the agenda for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. They stressed that this goal remains a matter of real urgency and must be delivered through an accelerated process of negotiations on all fronts.

The Ministers warmly welcomed the positive and substantial outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The unequivocal political undertaking given by the five nuclear-weapon States "to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals" demonstrates a new determination to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Recognition that nuclear weapons cannot be allowed to exist indefinitely was a singular step forward.

This had been achieved against a background of limited progress in negotiations in the field of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and a failure to grasp the opportunities of the post-cold war security environment. The programme of action agreed upon at the 2000 Review Conference must now be implemented fully and progress reported regularly through the review mechanisms of the Treaty.

The Ministers expressed concern at ongoing challenges to the non-proliferation regime. They urged the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve universal adherence to the Treaty. They repeated their call on those three States[1] which are not parties to the Treaty and which operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place their nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

They stressed the importance of full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty.

The Ministers called for the early commencement of negotiations on nuclear arms reductions between the United States of America and the Russian Federation in the light of the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference. They looked forward to early action by the five nuclear-weapon States on the series of undertakings made by them at the Review Conference. All States must contribute to the achievement of the objectives agreed at the Review Conference.

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[1] India, Pakistan and Israel.

They called on the parties to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to preserve its integrity and validity. They reiterated their call on them to refrain from the implementation of any measure that would undermine the Treaty's purpose. They encouraged them in this way to contribute to the creation of more favourable conditions for further negotiations on limiting strategic arms to which they committed themselves at the Review Conference.

In this context, they called on all States to refrain from decisions that could impact negatively on nuclear disarmament, lead to a new arms race or be inconsistent with the commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Ministers regretted that the agreement at the Review Conference for the immediate establishment of a body to deal with nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva had not yet been acted upon.

The Ministers underlined the importance of the Review Conference agreement for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the negotiation of a ban on the production of fissile material. They also welcomed the agreement to begin consideration of the broader verification regime that will be required in a world without nuclear weapons.

The Ministers concluded that international peace and stability can best be maintained and enhanced with the involvement of the international community as a whole. Multilateral engagement and further progress on disarmament is crucial to this. The Ministers would continue to pursue the New Agenda initiative with determination.

They announced that they will table a draft resolution in the First Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.